

Canvas acquired from the military has in part replaced the ricestraw mat called nukubuku, which is used for drying grain in the sun. There were also several looms for nukubuku in prewar Yamada, but few if any now. Before the war several families had looms for making mushiru, whose weft is reed ('ii') and warp is cord made of pandanus root. At the present time one old man still makes mushiru. His loom is a primitive double-bar loom and it takes him more than a day to weave one mat. He cannot compete with the much faster looms used at Kanegusuku.

286
178

3. Rural Finance

The chief money crop is still sugar, and the leading financial institution in the countryside is still the 'moai', or mutual loan group. However, there are innumerable other occasions when the farmer must pay out money or borrow money. These occasions include personal loans, village taxes, levies, payments to officials, contributions of money for prizes at fairs, and occasional contributions for village improvements. Finally, there is the traditional last resort of people in financial difficulties---sale of one or more of their children.

Mutual Loan Groups Before the war the mutual loan group, or 'moai' (Okinawan mye) met only once or twice a year. Each of the forty shares (kuchi) averaged ¥20, and the record book had to have the 'son' office stamp upon it. The record book could not be shown or opened except at each meeting. Almost all postwar 'moai' meet once a month, and usually this is the fifteenth of the lunar month. The reason for this date is not known. It may have some relation to the fact that habu snakes are night feeders, and may feed less on moonlit nights; or it may be due to the need for moonlight to find one's inebriated way home.

452

Since there was no livestock after the war, most 'moai' then were formed with the main purpose of buying livestock, although the winner did not have to use the money for this. Nanahan people have an unwritten rule that 'moai' money may not be used to pay off debts. The amounts of the shares of the three postwar 'moai' reflect the slowly increasing amounts of money available to the farmer. The first 'moai' had twenty shares at ¥200 each; the second one had twenty shares at ¥500 each; the third and still-continuing 'moai'---scheduled to end in April of 1955---has twenty-four shares at ¥1,000 each.

Every 'moai' has slightly different rules, but all are relatively simple. The following are the rules for the Nanahan 'moai':

1. Time of meeting is about 9 P.M. Bids will be received about 9:30, but if a person is late or absent when the bids are read, he will not be able to get the money even if he planned a low bid.
2. Bids: if a written bid is for the same amount as a verbal bid, the money goes to the person submitting the written bid.
3. The money will be collected at the house of the tuinushi (person who was the successful bidder at the last meeting). The tuinushi must get three other persons to sign a guarantee of his reliability.